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Agenda item 50

Effects of atomic radiation

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-seventh session the item entitled "Effects of atomic radiation" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item, and held a general debate and took action on the item, at its 22nd meeting, on 13 November 2012 (see A/C.4/67/SR.22).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/67/46).

4. At the 22nd meeting, on 13 November, the representative of Germany, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, made a statement on the work of that Committee (see A/C.4/67/SR.22).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.4/67/L.8

5. At the 22nd meeting, on 13 November, the representative of Germany, on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Effects of atomic radiation"

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(A/C.4/67/L.8). Subsequently, Armenia, China, India, Italy, Latvia, Monaco, Norway and Peru joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the same meeting, the Chair of the Committee stated that the draft did not entail programme budget implications.

7. Also at its 22nd meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/67/L.8 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. Recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

8. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Effects of atomic radiation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955, by which it established the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and its subsequent resolutions on the subject, in which, inter alia, it requested the Scientific Committee to continue its work,

Concerned about the potentially harmful effects on present and future generations resulting from the levels of radiation to which mankind and the environment are exposed,

Conscious of the continuing need to examine and compile information about atomic and ionizing radiation and to analyse its effects on mankind and the environment, and conscious also of the increased volume, complexity and diversity of that information,

Acknowledging the concerns about the radiological consequences of an accident which were raised by the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan,

Reaffirming the desirability of the Scientific Committee continuing its work, and welcoming the increased commitment of States members of the Scientific Committee,

Emphasizing the vital need for sufficient, assured and predictable funding, as well as efficient management, of the work of the secretariat of the Scientific Committee to arrange the annual sessions and coordinate the development of documents based on scientific reviews of the sources of ionizing radiation and its effects on human health and the environment,

Recognizing the increasing importance of the scientific work of the Scientific Committee and the need to carry out unforeseen additional work in cases such as the nuclear accident in Japan,

Recognizing also the importance of voluntary contributions to the general trust fund established by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to support the work of the Scientific Committee,

Considering that the high quality of the work of the Scientific Committee needs to be maintained in the future,

Recognizing the importance of disseminating results from the work of the Scientific Committee and widely publicizing scientific knowledge about atomic

radiation, and recalling, in that context, principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1]

Welcoming Belarus, Finland, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Spain and Ukraine as members of the Scientific Committee and their attendance at the fifty-ninth session of the Scientific Committee in May 2012,

1. *Commends* the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for the valuable contribution it has been making since its inception to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation, and for fulfilling its original mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgement;

2. *Reaffirms* the decision to maintain the present functions and independent role of the Scientific Committee;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the work of the Scientific Committee, and takes note of the report on its fifty-ninth session;[2]

4. *Welcomes with appreciation* the scientific report on attributing health effects to radiation exposure and inferring risks[3] requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/100 of 17 December 2007 and the report on uncertainties in risk estimates for cancer due to exposure to ionizing radiation;[4]

5. *Requests* the Scientific Committee to continue its work, including its important activities to increase knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session;

6. *Endorses* the intentions and plans of the Scientific Committee for conducting its programme of work of scientific review and assessment on behalf of the General Assembly, in particular its intention to complete at its next session an assessment of the levels of exposure and radiation risks attributable to the accident following the great east-Japan earthquake and tsunami and a report on the effects of radiation exposure on children, and its decision to initiate its next Global Survey of Medical Radiation Usage and Exposures in close cooperation with other relevant organizations, encourages the Scientific Committee to submit at its earliest convenience the other related reports, including on assessments of levels of ionizing radiation exposure from electrical energy production, and requests the Scientific Committee to submit plans for its ongoing and future programme of work to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session;

7. *Calls upon* the Secretariat to facilitate the timely publication of the reports of the Scientific Committee, inter alia, by continuing to streamline internal procedures as necessary, and to strive to publish the reports within the same calendar year as their approval;

8. *Re-emphasizes* the need for the Scientific Committee to hold regular sessions on an annual basis so that its report can reflect the latest developments and

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/67/46).

[3] Ibid., chap. III, sect. 1.

[4] Ibid., sect. 2.

findings in the field of ionizing radiation and thereby provide updated information for dissemination among all States;

9. *Invites* the Scientific Committee to continue its consultations with scientists and experts from interested Member States in the process of preparing its future scientific reports, and requests the Secretariat to facilitate such consultations;

10. *Welcomes*, in this context, the readiness of Member States to provide the Scientific Committee with relevant information on the levels and effects of ionizing radiation, and invites the Scientific Committee to analyse and give due consideration to such information, particularly in the light of its own findings;

11. *Also welcomes* the strategy of the Scientific Committee to improve data collection, encourages in this regard Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations concerned to provide further relevant data about doses, effects and risks from various sources of radiation, which would greatly help in the preparation of future reports of the Scientific Committee to the General Assembly, and further encourages the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Health Organization and other relevant organizations to establish and coordinate with the Secretariat the arrangements for periodic collection and exchange of data on radiation exposures of workers, the general public and, in particular, medical patients;

12. *Requests* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue and strengthen, as appropriate, support for the effective conduct of the work of the Scientific Committee and for the dissemination of its findings to the General Assembly, the scientific community and the public;

13. *Urges* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue to strengthen the funding of the Scientific Committee, pursuant to paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 65/96 of 10 December 2010;

14. *Encourages* Member States to make voluntary contributions to the general trust fund established by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and also to make contributions in kind in order to support the work of the Scientific Committee.